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THE
RETROSPECT.

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THE
RETROSPECT;

OR,

REFLECTIONS

ON

The State of Religion and Politics

IN

FRANCE AND GREAT BRITAIN.

BY THE REV. JOHN OWEN, *A.M.*

FELLOW OF CORPUS-CHRISTI COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

Atque utinam Respublica felisset *quo cæperat statu*; nec in
homines non tam *commutandarum rerum* quam *evertendarum*
cupidos incidisset.

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1794.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Remarks owe their existence to some of the late transactions in that infatuated country against which our arms are now carried. The Author was of the number of those who admired with enthusiasm the Reformation of the French Monarchy, by the events of the first Revolution.— Having had opportunities of observing the country at the very dissimilar periods of July 1790 and September 1793, he received impressions

pressions of a very opposite nature, and finds motives of abhorrence to the *later* Revolutions in the principles that led him to applaud the *first*. The Reflections which ensue were written with no studied attention to method, and were dictated by no influence but that of conviction: they are sent into the world in their imperfect state, lest the delays necessary to render them more worthy of the public patronage should preclude the uses they are intended to serve. It was judged unnecessary to crowd the pages with references to facts, as the records of these are in the hands and recollection of every one. If it be asked, to what *Party*
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the Author belongs; he can only reply, That the spirit of his system is to *fear God*, to *honour the King*, and to *love the Brotherhood*; and that, zealous to support the *dignity* of his *Profession*, the *authority* of his *Sovereign*, and the *rights* of his *Fellow-subjects*, he acknowledges *no Party* where these principles are not revered.

DEC. 23, 1793.

THE RETROSPECT,

&c. &c.

AT a period when a people, once renowned for loyalty and refinement, are trampling under foot the rights of monarchy and the sensibilities of nature; when unconciliated by vengeful regicide they are demolishing the altars of christian adoration, and sanctioning, by acts of usurped Legislation, the most outrageous blasphemies against the God of heaven: at a period when the professional supporters of established devotion are immolating at the altars of reviving paganism all the distinctions of revealed religion,—it becomes the duty of all, upon whose services the public have any claim, to oppose the advances of that enthusiasm which threatens to overspread the world with unexampled barbarism.

Foremost in the rank of human instructors the public teachers of Christianity should feel themselves particularly called upon to erect a barrier in such a crisis, against the threatened universality of infidel scepticism; and in moments of such danger to crowd around the tottering altars of national religion. To *them* are professedly committed the faithful oracles of regenerative truth—with *them* is lodged the powerful artillery of christian defence—from *them* the public is taught to expect the generous effusions of instructive eloquence, and the useful corroboratives of exemplary faith.—Constituted by the original laws of the empire, guardians of the public manners, it is theirs to watch with active jealousy every departure from acknowledged rectitude; to anticipate the consequences of infant heresies, and to protect the fabric of national faith from the assaults of profaneness, and the ambush of sophistry.

The History of the World presents no æra in which the very existence of religion was so formidably threatened. In all the vicissitudes of pagan empire, regard was had to established devotion; and protection extended to the altars of the Gods:—whatever changes were introduced
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into their modes of government ; whatever refinements into their systems of faith, still the propriety of religious adoration remained unquestioned ; and the jurisdiction of the Deities was considered as paramount to the threats of the conqueror, or the decrees of the Legislator.

In the annals of past times, the hand of reform has not unfrequently been stretched to heal the maladies of an unsound government :—orders once consecrated by public admiration have been annihilated, and the idolized distinctions of a long antiquity have been consigned to oblivion, or to change :—yet in all the havock which such comprehensive regulations have produced ; amidst all the tumult of war, the rapacity of plunder, and the convulsions of Revolution, the temples of the gods have stood secure from sacrilegious violence ; or, if spoiled of their votive treasures in the moment of victorious insolence, they have suffered more from the enthusiasm of conquest than the effrontery of atheism, and yielded rather to the thirst of pillage than the wantonness of infidelity.

It was, indeed, reserved for a nation in the decline of her political greatness, and in the

prospect of gathering calamities, to exhibit enormities against Heaven and good faith, which the most extravagant legends of fabulous romance have never recorded;—it was reserved for a nation whose dawning Freedom astonished the wise, captivated the generous, and conciliated the bigotted, to tarnish the lustre of her regenerated policy by acts of Legislation, and events of private example, which kindle resentment in the breast of Freedom, and shock the sensibilities of the *Patriot* and the *Christian*.

It is impossible to turn the eye of attention upon the recent extravagancies of the French Republic, without recoiling at the sanguinary violence which marks its acts of public authority, and the enthusiastic iniquity which accompanies the individual exertions of its most distinguished citizens. By a series of events to which massacre and good fortune, the artifices of faction, and the fatality of circumstances, have equally contributed, all the happy regulations of a purified Legislation have vanished;—a Constitution formed by united talents and Patriotism, has been rudely demolished;—a crude system of changeful tyranny has been inti-

instituted, and a handful of assassins have established their thrones upon the ruins of wisdom, of probity, and honor.

Who, that is not steeled to the emotions of mercy can regard with a steady eye the bloody progress of those factious rulers, through all the stages of their enormity, from the * day that opened the veins of bleeding Patriotism, and yielded to Republican Cabal the surviving spoils of a debilitated Monarchy? Who, that is not abandoned to fixed insensibility, can view with patient speculation the last insults offered to the fallen Monarch,—the mockery which assumed the forms of justice, and the † ferocity which drowned the accents of complaint?—Warm with the blood of an unoffending Sovereign, the scaffold receives (unexpected survivor of the last indignities) his widowed Comfort!—Persecuted by all the brutal expedients which intoxicated faction could devise, she is dragged to that stern tribunal where justice frowns in rigid horrors, and mercy never whispered soft acquittal!—All the caprices of past intrigue,

* August 10th.

† The drums beat when he would have addressed the people.

all the tyrannies of revolutionary tumult are rudely charged upon this haggard ghost of departed beauty : but councils of intrigue, and systems of disaffection, are not deemed charges of sufficient turpitude to satiate the demands of greedy malice ; crimes must be torn from the abyss of iniquity, and invention be tortured to imagine faults which may transmit to future times the name of Antoinette, under all the black disgrace of unnatural deformity.—But here let the scene for ever close !—Consigned to eternal oblivion be the memory of that tribunal which, in exhibiting the last triumphs of an abandoned faction, outstripped all the recorded achievements of gigantic villany !—Peace to the ashes of that injured form, which, familiarized by long habitudes to cowardly insolence, were yet called to encounter those hideous shocks which no acquaintance with practised iniquity could anticipate, and which no resources of mental fortitude could sustain ! Posterity will glance with cautious curiosity over this monstrous fiction of stubborn barbarity :—recoiling sensibility will dread to tear from its drear obscurity what nature hears not without horror, and what the rising feelings of the human heart conspire to discredit.

The blow is now struck, the monarchy is subverted, and the last supporters of its declining splendor have been immolated at the altars of a revengeful faction. Freedom has seen, with agonizing throes, the glaring outrages that have been committed under her banners, and the aggravated crimes which have covered her prostituted name. All the bonds of fealty have been broken; pledged allegiance and covenanted faith have been publicly violated; and neither the dictates of policy, nor the accents of mercy have prevailed, to temper the unparalleled rigours of massacre and proscription.

Full as the career of iniquity had shewn itself, there yet remained a glimmering hope, that, sick at length of havock and slaughter, the guilty Demagogues would relax their glutted tyranny; and the loosened energies of public virtue resume their intermitted functions:— There still remained amongst the hideous waste of demolished thrones and abjured divinities, a ray of expectation, that, urged by frantic patriotism to inordinate revenge against ancient prejudices, the tide of rebellion would yet be turned; and the national enthusiasm be dis-

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ciplined by wholesome and permanent laws. Circumstances had indeed little encouraged such expectation ; and the greater part of those who had distinguished themselves by an attachment to the revolutionary outline, renounced their affection for a people, whose inconsistency had marred their patriotism ; and whose vices had rendered them unworthy of the public patronage. There were not, however, wanting amongst the strenuous admirers of the first Legislature those who, averse to despondency in an affair of such lively interest, ventured to flatter themselves that the nation would revert to its first principles, and that the softer yoke of a generous monarchy would yet succeed to the oppressive bondage of an outrageous democracy. Amongst those who, attached to monarchical authority, sighed for the restoration of this salutary system,—discordant opinions still prevailed ; and the wished-for accomplishment of this necessary measure seemed to demand, in the view of *different* individuals, exertions of a *different* nature. To the one, the united hostilities of the European powers appeared the only instrument which could chastise the insolence of usurped authority, and recal to reason and to loyalty an infatuated nation : To the other,

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the gentler maxims of a pacific policy appeared more consonant with the dictates of public justice and political expediency. The reason which guided these contradictory systems might indeed be unequal, yet the integrity alike in each. Spectators alone of these tumultuous events, each laboured to ascend through the chain of outrages which succeeded each other, to the remote causes which gave birth to all. The conclusions were different according as the researches had been more or less profound, or conducted under a greater or less degree of prepossession. To some the horrors, which stained the later æras, appeared the desperate fruits which sprung from the co-operation of internal cabal and foreign hostility. To others, the growing ravages which desolated all the remaining monuments of ancient establishment, appeared the inevitable result of those early principles which dictated the subversion of political distinctions ; and inspired the luminous, yet impracticable, code of human rights.

So novel indeed was the experiment in the vicissitudes of empires ; so instantaneous was the conversion, and so rapid the establishment of this regenerated people, that the most profound

found speculation regarded it with astonishment, and the most dispassionate philosophy beheld it with enthusiasm. In an event so new in the annals of legislation, it were not to be wondered at, that men, equal in understanding, in loyalty, and patriotism, should have adopted, from the complicated transactions, sentiments which militated essentially with each other: It were not to be wondered at, that, regarding the dissolution of ancient establishments, and the fabrication of new regulations, men accustomed to the freedom of political discussion, should have had the hardiness to approve or condemn, as the facts accorded with their received systems, or contradicted their habitual maxims of national policy.

The abrupt destruction of hereditary distinctions, the bold confiscation of the clerical treasures, the unqualified abolition of feudal privileges, provoked indignant murmurs on the one hand, while they called forth the most lively applause on the other. To those who regarded with plauditory triumph the zeal which combated ancient establishments, the stupendous evils which those had produced were present in all their glaring extent. To them

them the history of past crimes was written in blood ; and government appeared but a fabricated expedient to plunder and oppress mankind, A nation insulted by an overgrown nobility, seemed, in their view, to demand some late redress ; and vengeance appeared not improperly exercised upon speculation, though supported by ancient institution ; and violence, though sanctioned by immemorial usage. On the contrary, those who stood aloof, while admiration gazed on these brilliant transactions, fixed with steady eagerness on that portion of crime which entered into these acts of heroism, while they glanced with partial attention over those complicate oppressions which gave them birth. These suffered themselves to be engrossed by the very natural commiseration of private inconvenience ; and made no allowance for that torrent of indignation which centuries of tyranny and wanton persecution had inspired. They paid no deference to the exasperated feelings of a nation, escaped from the lash of guilty authorities. In compassionating the few, they neglected to consider the many ; and in the sufferings of the innocent, forgot the atrocities of the guilty.

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It is easy to see how opposite sentiments might enter minds equally disposed to the support of truth, upon a subject of such novelty, complicity, and political extent. The abolition of Aristocracy might be considered by the one, a political good ; by the other, a political evil ; with a shew of argument in each contending scale, that would appear a just counterbalance the one to the other. In the one case, Aristocracy would naturally find no inconsiderable advocates amongst those whom private predilection, added to the supposition of acknowledged utility, had attached to its institution. Ten thousand prejudices conspire to rivet the affections to ancient distinctions ; and the mind familiarized to these by habits of long and uninterrupted intimacy, associates the laws which protect their privileges with those which nature herself promulges. It was natural that establishments of ancient prescription should have found, amidst all their extravagancies, no few defenders ; and under all their corruptions, no mean apologists. The brilliant services which these have rendered to civilized society, the support they have communicated in the convulsions of revolt, the dignity they have conferred in the progressions of refinement,

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what they have added to the common splendor, what they have operated for the public good, might contribute to commend their fashionable influence, till mankind had forgotten to mark the boundaries between primitive right and covenanted institution ; and learned to blend in one common mass, the distinct authorities of nature and civil society.

On the other hand, the evils that grew out of that pernicious stock, the wild luxuriancy of those multifarious shoots which penetrated every part of the Gallic Empire, had converted this imagined good into a real evil, rendered it an insupportable burden to the groaning subjects of its enormous tyranny, and given birth to disorders more numerous and pernicious than those it was intended to prevent. There is in all institutions of human construction, a point beyond which iniquity cannot extend ; a period at which evil consummates its plenitude, and violence defeats its own purpose. In France, at the æra of the Revolution, aristocracy had found this point. To this crisis had the overbearing insolence * of the nobles arrived ; when

* *Vide* Rabaud's *Précis Historique*.

senseless pertinacity urged their extravagance, and infatuated obstinacy precipitated their downfall. It was then, while, intoxicated with redundant authority, and bigotted to distinctions which were yielding to refinement, they carried their licence to an excess, which the circumstances of policy and of justice must for ever condemn,—that the sparks of a rebellion already ripened, kindled into flame: the exasperated feelings of an indignant people, armed against the authority of their insulting rulers; and big with vengeance, annihilated for ever those establishments, under whose licentious outrages they had so often bled. The blow was sudden and unpremeditated; particular events hastened on the catastrophe; and circumstances, which could not be foreseen, precipitated the measure. Enthusiastic with new and unfelt sensations, the Legislators of the country were seen to pass, in the paroxysms of their zeal, all the bounds of policy and justice; they abandoned that experience which might instruct, for that instinct which must mislead; and, surrendering themselves to the transports of recovered freedom, they sapped the stamina of their future prosperity, tore up the roots of implanted authority, and committed all the props of national security

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to the raging flames of an extravagant patriotism.

Perhaps the ruin which has since extended itself throughout the different departments of civil authority, owes no small share of its present magnitude to the unqualified abolition of the aristocratic orders. The extent of this evil was not promptly apprehended by that zealous enthusiasm which, once embarked in enterprizes of reform, is not usually confined within the limits of prudent policy. It were, however, easy to discover, in retracing the steps of revolutionary operations, how inconvenient a chasm must have been created in the scale of society, by the total abolition of orders so numerous, so diversified, and of such acknowledged importance in the sphere of authority. In them was annihilated that comprehensive link, which, in the subsequent purity of government, would have defined, by an intermediate interest, the monarch's grandeur and the people's rights; that link, by which the contending advances of the one and the other would have received an effectual correction, and have been preserved amidst all their conflicts in a constitutional equipoise. The demo-
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lition of these orders marred the unity of that system which was adopted by the first reformers, and left a *defideratum* in the future monarchy, which all the energies of patriotic enthusiasm could not supply.

Amongst the internal causes of future havoc, the abolition of Aristocracy appears to possess the foremost rank in those indiscreet measures which disorganized the body of the empire, and precipitated the monarch's downfall. The exalted rank of chief magistrate in an extensive empire, demands some medium to transmit those rays in softened lustre, which would offend, by their tremendous majesty, the naked sight. The distance is so wide in the sphere of created influence, between the throne and the subject, that all which issues from the Executive Authority must, in this case, appear to rush like the cataract from the frowning precipice, instead of descending (as it ought to have done) by the mediums of a just gradation, and circulating through channels of artful communication. France exhibited, in this instance, an experiment of impracticable policy; and vainly expected from a defective system of garbled authorities, all the brilliant advantages

advantages of the most perfect government. But these destroyed, a mighty void was seen in the sphere of government; and the surviving orders were torn asunder by an act of baneful separation: the bulk of the people were left to gaze, at an awful distance, upon the monarch, who thus stood insulated amidst a desolate sphere, once peopled by the supports of his grandeur and the organs of his authority. A thousand jealousies were now seen to obstruct the concord of the existing authorities, and embarrass the movements of the executive power.—The monarch saw, with anxious apprehension, the bold advances which trenched upon his reduced prerogative:—The people eyed with dread suspicion, every exertion of monarchical sovereignty, and laboured to confine that power from which they apprehended the return of ancient servitude. Unfortunately for society, all the conflicts which found existence between the rival parties, terminated in favour of the populace. The torrent thus acquired force from ineffectual opposition, till order fell before the formidable engines of disorganization, and the rising turbulence of triumphant faction acquired the zenith of its influence. Then commenced that spirit of de-

terminated anarchy, which crumbled, in rapid succession, all authorities, and levelled, amidst the ruins of extirpated tyranny, a fabric that had held captive the admiration of Europe.

It would be readily admitted, that the boasted principles of Gallic Policy (as expounded in modern systems) approaches nearest to the standard of ideal perfection; and that in the *perfection* of society, a government by representation is not only best accommodated to the wants of mankind, but affords the best security against tyranny and corruption. But the manners of men have not yet acquired their *millennian* softness; nor is society arrived at that point of polished excellence which is necessary to the constitution of so pure a system. The social virtues of mankind are perfected by slow and gradual refinements; and all the important changes which have benefitted the world by great and durable advantages, have been effected by patient industry, and adopted with cautious policy. To the construction of a government, no mean calculations are requisite. It is not sufficient that the system be pure, it must also be apt and practicable.—The tempers of mankind are varied in a thousand different shades;

shades ; they are moulded to different habits by the varieties of climate, of history, and of events ; their obedience is to be excited by maxims suited to their received opinions ; and their allegiance to be insured by expedients, adapted to their national character. Respect must be paid to the extent of their knowledge and the cast of their morals ; to the information they possess, and the virtue they discover. In France no such calculations were ever attended to ; and no such circumstances were ever suffered to have weight. The whole mass of their revolutionary schemes was formed upon abstract principles of political science. All the experiments of past ages were, by them, held in disfavour ; and wisdom appeared to utter her first oracles in their plans of Legislation. All their intellect, and all their enthusiasm, were absorbed in imagining schemes of immaculate policy, instead of purging the ancient channels of corrupt authority, and giving energy to those regulations which had been already enacted. The consequences of this speculation are now seen ; and France will for ever regret the destruction of those civilized distinctions. Interwoven with the sinews of monarchical authority, they drew after them in their fall, that

stupendous fabric whose ruins now support the throne of anarchy and murder.

Whether Monarchy or Republicanism be most favourable to general freedom, is a question which in reference to the reform of ancient empires, it must now appear too late to agitate.—Ere the fatal experiment was made upon that country, whose name now revolts the feelings of humanity; ere the rueful consequences had proclaimed its inexpediency in characters of blood, men might have discussed with cool and harmless disquisition a question which still remained undecided in the theory of politics. But, at a period like the present, when stained with the guilt of unprecedented crimes, Republicanism is stalking in giant insolence over the ruins of a demolished Monarchy; when, brandishing a more than tyrant sceptre, it is fastening the chains of unparelled barbarism upon the yielding subjects of its cruel authority; when martyr'd Sovereigns heap its altars, and bleeding Patriots adorn its orgies; when holy faith and Christian devotion exhibit their lacerated forms, and fly before the demons of its impious idolatry; when the ancient professors of established religion are ab-

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juring with public blasphemy the God they served; when the hoary priest is immolating his ancient functions to the Baals of pretended philosophy, and demolishing those altars which once smoked with the incense of his sacrifice—in such a moment, and in the face of such enormities, to move a question, were to offer an apology; and not to execrate, were almost to approve,

It is admitted, that in the earlier stages of their Revolutionary History, when intent upon modifying their internal government they abstained from acts of outrage, the opinions of mankind might be innocently divided upon the wisdom and equity of their operations. When they even arrived to that height of extravagance which dethroned the Monarch, inverted the laws, and gave up every valued institution to caprice and change,—nations unconnected with the consequences these drew on, might still regard, without a necessary interest, the progressive revolutions their authorities experienced; and individuals might still comment, as their feelings or their judgment suggested, upon the events that rose before them;—but when big with insolence, or prompted by ambition;

when harrassed by inconvenience or intoxicated with success, they denounced in riotous phrenzy all the constituted authorities in Europe;—when, not content with a liberty themselves had established, they wished to proselyte the world at large—to force their noxious draughts upon the revolting palates of less fantastic patriots, and to crusade under the colours of a regenerative philosophy against the tyrannies of the world,—they ceased to be regarded with speculative indifference:—the bosoms of men began to beat with generous indignation against the invaders of their settled authorities, and the menacing adversaries of their ancient laws.—They saw, in the denunciations of a powerful people, the alarming precursors of a gathering storm, and trembled for the security of those establishments which cement the bonds of society. The flames of animosity were justly kindled against the insolent pretenders to universal empire; and the abhorrence of a nation which menaced religion, good faith, and civil authority, was not without reason regarded as a test of virtue, of honour, and of patriotism.

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Since the commencement of those measures which have carried the British arms against this infatuated country, the progress of iniquity in their factious Reformers has become more rapid; and the hideous mass of their preceding crimes has been augmented by enormities which find no parallel in the calendar of iniquity. The unexpected check which their ambition experienced in the repulsion of their armies from our menaced Ally—the precipitate retreat of their debilitated forces from the fattening soil of the conquered Netherlands—the defection of Dumourier, and the death of Dampiere—the fall of Valenciennes, of Mentz, and Toulon; these severally agitated the public spirit:—each event that damped their ardor sharpened their acrimony, and turned their lust of conquest into a temper of revenge. Hence the distractions of divided factions, and the severities that fell upon the weaker parties! Hence the scaffold was seen to drink up the blood of the innocent, and proscription to replace the exhausted treasures of successive defeats! The cause of enthusiasm could alone be supported by brilliant achievements; and the shock that arrested the current of prosperity, might prove fatal to the existence of

the public delusion. To divert therefore the mind from a contemplation of danger, and to remove the impresson of impending calamity, some barbarous expedients must be devised to keep the passions alive ; and some feats performed of general interest. Hence the vengeance which followed each event of national defeat :—Disappointments were healed by some bloody sacrifice, and the wrongs of ill fortune were punished in the victims of her caprice. The public was taught to regard the arms of the Republic invincible by all but the arts of corruption :—Hence their towns are carried by *intrigue*, their armies vanquished by *bribery*—the conquests of their adversaries are said to be made oftener by circumvention than by courage ; and all the defeats themselves experience, are ascribed rather to the inexperience of the conquered than to the intrepidity of the conquerors. The ill-fated leaders of routed squadrons are arraigned for crimes in which Fortune has disappointed the exertions of courage ; and atone, by their lives, for losses which they could not prevent :—in them failure is treated as a mark of incivism ; and a want of success regarded as a want of fidelity. The country they served is seen to
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fasten upon their declining prowess; to supply the default of their accusation by fictitious charges, and sacrifice at the altar of vindictive resentment the guiltless defenders of an ungrateful authority.

But it is not their injustice, it is not their ingratitude, it is not their public violence that provoke the indignation of British sensibility. It is not that tearing up the institutions of antiquity, and violating the ordinances of their own establishment, they are introducing havoc and anarchy into every department of their empire;—it is not that violating the faith of nations, they are trampling upon all the rights of prostrate humanity;—it is not that proscribing the innocent and the virtuous, they are exalting and dignifying the criminal and the profligate;—it is not for these considerations, powerful as they may be to wound the feelings, that Englishmen glow with generous indignation: the crimes of France are of a still deeper dye, and the enormities of this nation possess still darker shades of guilt and profligacy. It is, that braving the thunders of Heaven, these bold invaders of all that is venerable and sacred in the institutions of the world,

world, have spoiled society of its hallowed sanctuaries, and destroyed the altars of Christian adoration: it is that rising above the ordinary level of sacrilegious insolence they have carried the arms of destructive Reformation into the temples of immemorial worship; and not only subverted the shrines of a corrupt faith, but even proscribed, with unrecorded scepticism, the universal principle of an acknowledged Divinity!

In our own country the public profession of a religious character was, perhaps, in no period of our history more generally admitted; and the authentic functions of the Christian faith was in no period of reformed religion more universally acknowledged. In a nation like our own, numerous in its population, and sublime in its public character; great in arms and imperious in commerce, all the vices of civilized luxury will find their place;—but, viewing in an estimate of equitable allowance, the prominent features of the British character, it will not be found that religious influence exists in so reduced a proportion as is generally imagined. That Christianity fails of its due authority in controlling the follies of fashionable

able dissipation, and operating the purity of dignified example, will readily be allowed ; and those who are interested in its universal domination, will secretly deplore the obstructions to its empire :—yet, admitting the prevalence of vice and corruption ; admitting the influence of practical depravity, the sanctions of Christianity stand at least undisputed ; whatever corruptions may tarnish the conduct, the system of faith is at least defended from sacrilegious degradation ; whatever crimes or follies may deform the purity of practical character, still the bounds of virtue and vice are religiously preserved ; and the rites of devotion are revered by those who are abandoned, to the pollutions of vice and immorality. We have not yet caught the contagious influence of Gallic infidelity, nor become proselytes to the credulity of their blasphemous scepticism. We hear with abhorrence the rumour that reports their wretched philosophy : and the violence they have offered to the shrines of the Deity, endear to us more tenderly the altars of domestic worship. To us the honour of Religion is of no small estimation in the scale of public policy. The celebration of its rites is by us maintained with a zeal and respect that proclaim its influence in the sphere of

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authority ; all its sanctions are by us classed among the acknowledged records of undisputed veracity ; and the observance of its institutions is connected with the first duties of civil obligation.

Untouched therefore by the phrenzy of political distraction ; uncontaminated by the poison of irreligious wantonness ;—the country we boast stands exempt from the maladies of that innovating Philosophy which, in pushing refinements to all the heights of imaginary excellence, attenuates the sinews of Government, and evaporates the vigour of authority. While secure amidst the carnage of obnoxious Administration, our Rulers possess the public confidence ;—while safe from the impression of a foreign enthusiasm, our citizens discover the firmness of undeviating loyalty, it becomes a duty of no common obligation to cherish the existence of this rational unanimity, and to protect the sobriety of the public conviction by all the arts of a sagacious policy,—that the shocks of violence, or the stratagems of subtlety, may introduce no weakness into the establishments of the empire ; and that the fabric of our Government, and the
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institutions of our religion may be preserved inviolate amidst the tumults of foreign hostility, and the turbulence of domestic discontents.

To meliorate the state of defective administration, to purge the channels of corrupt authority, to drag forth influence from its hidden fortresses, and drive from their lurking ambush the forces of oppression, are privileges dear to the feelings of freedom; privileges sacred in the code of British rights: they are interwoven with the principles of constitutional independence, and are commended to our regard by the sentiments of our first Legislators, and the example of our most distinguished patriots. By these our ancestors have established that freedom which, combining the energies of authority with the rights of humanity, attracts the steady attachment of enlightened patriotism. By these the privileges of a generous government must be maintained in all the lustre of original institution, and handed down to a late posterity untarnished by corruption, untorn by licentiousness. There are, however, periods in the history of a nation, in which principles, the most unalterable, must suffer a temporary suspension; in which the ingenuous zeal of patriots

triotic reform must intermit its active functions. There are moments in which the magnitude of the evil is diminished by the dangers attending its removal; moments, in which the violence of the remedy may surpass the virulence of the disease; and the continuance may be judged less formidable than the cure. It has not, without reason, been contended by those who calculate the state of society upon a scale of comprehensive policy, that to such a period England is now arrived; and that the unparalleled crisis of political ferment offers no security for the wisdom of reforms. That salutary correctives might with justice be applied to the different orders of existing authority, is a truth which observation attests; a truth which should never be ceded to fear, nor sacrificed to accommodation; it is a truth which existing abuses proclaim, and which loyalty unites with patriotism to impress indelibly upon the heart. Tardiness and exaction degrade our courts, and venality and corruption disgrace our public functionaries; laws the most rigorous have survived their uses, and statutes the most degrading continue uncanceled. The Representation of the country has departed from its ancient purity, and exhibits in its state of modern corruption,

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a striking contrast to its primitive institution. The fact is notorious; and whatever sophistry may plead in its defence, the evils which flow from its distorted functions are not to be measured by any rule of conjecture. In a country constituted upon the principles we acknowledge, the strongest security for sound administration exists in the due balance of the separate orders, and the just proportion of that authority which the laws of the empire have annexed to each. The surest means of preserving this equipoise is, by continuing inviolate the representation, and by repelling corruption from that important body, which is constituted the organ of the people's wishes, and interposed as a counterbalance against aristocratic influence. The splendor of Aristocracy will support its own privileges; and the throne of its authority is not found to experience much fluctuation. It is in the spirit of all bodies, to which society has annexed such flattering distinctions, to maintain their influence in its most ample extent, and to suffer no deduction from their weight in the scale of political authority. This was early seen in the history of this country, under a tyrannical yet pusillanimous monarch*. The

* King John.

determined jealousy of the privileged orders set bounds to the widening influence of the crown, and preserved, by the compactness of their union, the splendor of their privilege. The memory of this event is immortalized by the production of a *charter*, the proudest in the annals of the world ; and can only fall with the falling constitution. To the Aristocracy of this country we owe some gratitude ; nor can we withhold a due veneration to that authority which struck the rock from whence gushed the springs of freedom. Raised upon thrones of ancient dignity, surrounded by privileges of ample extent, the Aristocracy of the country may be considered as flourishing in its proudest luxuriancy at the present day, and covering, at least, as wide a sphere as is compatible with the spirit of the constitution. Yet, exalted as it stands in the scale of society, generously as it is endowed by the institutions of the realm, it possesses but the lustre of a mild supremacy, and wields no weapons of defiance against the rights of the citizen, or the equal laws of the empire : it was modified by ancient wisdom, and circumscribed by corrective patriotism ; it is clothed with the distinctions of unoppressive splendor, and furnished with the instruments of untyrannizing influence ; it is decorated with
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the insignia of patrimonial honours, and covered with the spoils of ancestral achievements ; it is furrounded with a blaze of ancient glory, and glows with the lustre of recorded virtues ; its monuments preserve the memory of our fame, and the brightest events of our history are read in its escutcheons ; all the arms of violence are wrested from its hands, and its exertions are coerced by inviolable laws ; its range is fixt by impassable limits ; its influence circumscribed by imperious authority ; it stands corrected and controlled by that invincible energy which defines and protects the rights of all ; it claims no pre-eminence in the guardianship of its property above that of the humblest freeholder ; its possessions are subject to the same charters, are amenable to the same judicature, and chargeable (in some few instances excepted) to the same national burdens which are measured out proportionably to the capacities of all.

As a tumultuous outcry has been raised against the existence of aristocratic distinctions ; as these have been represented by the champions of republicanism as abhorrent from nature, and full of oppression,—it may not be amiss to enter more at large into the political utility of

such distinctions, and the positive advantages which these contribute in the administration of an extensive empire. The public ears have indeed been sickened with the diffuse discussions of questions which involve the theory of politics ; but in deference to those able and acute writers, who have instructed the world upon subjects of this science, sufficient attention appears not uniformly to have been paid to the simpler points of practicability and expedience, upon which turns the excellence of political systems. Nature has been resorted to as sovereign arbiters of civil right ; and her dictates have been assumed as the infallible oracles of administrative authority. But surely it is contradicting the sense of mankind, to contend that the refined policy of civilized life is to be judged by the defective laws of primitive barbarism. To ascend through all the gradations of polished life, to wade backward through all the regulations of advanced society, to renounce the aids of an experience operated by the toil of successive ages, is to lose the privilege of a mellowed wisdom, is to sacrifice the advantages of progressive civilization, and to encounter all the unnecessary dangers of an untried expedient. There is besides, in the language of this philosophy,

philosophy, no small degree of weakness and absurdity. To contend that nature is paramount to all authority : What is it but to contend that the elements are superior to the mass, and the foundation to the superstructure ? This may or may not exist ; and its truth, in application to civil government, will appear, not from a comparison of refinement in general with unadulterated simplicity, but of the different forms of civilized establishment with the primitive laws of nature. Were all in nature perfect, it might with reason be contended, that every projected improvement of nature is an act of usurpation, and every departure from her simplicity is but a decline towards imperfection and deformity. But no such perfection is found in those laws which Nature divulges ; and the systems which she prescribes have neither comprehension nor energy sufficient to commend their application in a higher state of civilization. The fact is, that Nature dictates alone for that state in which her impulses can be with safety indulged ; her reign is circumscribed within that sphere and by that period in which self-preservation is found a principle competent to the exigencies of life, and a sufficient security for the existence of harmony. But the mul-

tiplication of individuals multiplies those passions which would interrupt the social agreement ; and in proportion to the augmentation society receives, the difficulty increases of a co-existence upon the narrow principles of natural association, and by the simple expedients of primitive institution. Fictions become necessary in the advancement of society, to encourage emulation in the sphere of active life ; to check, with reciprocal jealousies, the turbulence of individuals ; to form just gradations in the scale of authority, and give a spring to the political machine, by communicating an action among its several parts. Without expanding this reasoning into all that extent of which it would admit, it is easy to see how out of such exigencies, and to accomplish such purposes, distinctions may arise which have no existence in nature ; and how establishments may enter into the mass of society, justifiable alone by the necessity which gave them birth, and the utility which commends their continuance. It is easy to see in such a contemplation of the subject, that government is, in all shapes, a species of usurpation ; and that all distinctions which compose its institutions, or arise out of its existence, are so many violations of natural simplicity ;

simplicity; and are as incompatible with abstract right as they are conducive to general security.

Could we ascertain with just precision a state of nature, a state in which the primitive rights of man might be fully acknowledged, without the inconvenience of arming each member of the community against the other;—could we picture to ourselves that immaculate society, who partake as the common offspring of nature, all the luxuries of her bounty, and the equal rights of her children, it would quickly appear how little could be inferred from so circumscribed a groupe, in considering the exigencies of a numerous body; and how dissimilar the circumstances of so confined a community from the intricate complexities of augmented society:—it would readily be seen how inadequate are the regulations which conduct the first to the coercive discipline in the administration of the latter; and, in fine, how inapplicable would be reasonings drawn from the one, to answer at all the circumstances of the other.

It might appear superfluous to insist upon the incongruity of *natural equality* with *poli-*

tical subordination : in other circumstances than the present, it would certainly become an useless enforcement of an undisputed truth :—and it has been contended on the part of those who brandish the weapons of revolutionary law, that no *such equality* as would reduce mankind to one common standard is intended in their creed ; that it forms no part of their system, and constitutes no object in the scheme of their reform. I would gladly repose in the faith of such declaration ; nor would I so far impeach the good sense of this country as to suppose that principles so inconsistent with national freedom, principles so subversive of political authority, can be cherished by the respect of any one whom the public regards with veneration and esteem. I would not for a moment suppose that a constitution which was the result of exerted talents and integrity ; a constitution which blends the happy expedients of public honour and private security ; a constitution for which heroes have fought and patriots bled, should so far have lost its weight with those who are shaded by its influence as to fall before the forms of an imaginary policy, and yield to the pretensions of a barbarous equalization.

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What may indeed have sheltered behind the thick cover of a stubborn Patriotism; what may have entwined among the forward shoots of spontaneous loyalty, it remains for the readers of our future history to decide; yet, indecisive upon the question which regards our own, we are but too fully enlightened upon the politics of our enemies; and however ambiguous may be the maxims of our own reformers, no doubts can longer be entertained upon the motives and the policy of our neighbours. Whatever may have been contended by their ancient advocates at periods when the novel terms of their political creed admitted a vague and equivocal interpretation, the circumstances of such ambiguity have now been succeeded by events of explicit interpretation, and the grounds of their defence must be changed, or themselves consigned to their merited infamy. Whatever complexity might be found in the outline of their original proceedings is now completely unravelled: their subsequent acts have become the clearest comment upon their doubtful systems, and blazoned in bloody characters the sense of their decrees. The mask is now dropped on their part, and the equality they publish spurns the veil once assumed of a just and an equitable policy.

Lawless depredation supports the polluted thrones of their usurping rulers, and massacre and proscription are expounding the text of their civil code. All the bridled passions of barbarous nature are purposely let loose upon the higher orders of society ; the characters of the wealthiest individuals are impeached, and the inviolable sanctuary of property forced to exalt into consequence the plunderers of the nation : havock marches with giant-strides, and popular phrenzy regards the carnage of surviving probity with guilty exultation. While acts of outrage were perpetrated in tumult ; while these were confined to the insolence of a mob, though connived at and tolerated by an inefficient judicature,—nature might revolt at the deeds of hellish emprise yet the crime was incomplete, and the infamy wanted its perfection. But when the first authority of the land is seen to originate plans of the most glaring iniquity ; when the Legislative Assembly enrolls amongst its records decrees of public seizure and flagrant confiscation ; when by laws of its own enacting the rich are humbled to the insolence of the poor, and honour is transferred to the refuse of mankind ; when the virtuous defenders of a just subordination are butchered upon the scaffold, and the bust of an assassin

assassin † reposed amidst the shrines of the Gods; when outrages like these are originated and sanctioned by that authority which has constituted itself expositor of the law,—it can no longer remain a doubt with the virtuous in what estimation their principles are to be regarded: their conduct precludes at once palliation and defence; their systems and their iniquities are ~~intervened~~ ^{entwined} in each other; and the *Defenders of their Policy* must be considered as the *Apologists of their crimes*.

But to return. Admitting therefore (and no one will venture to dispute it) that distinctions which exist not in nature may yet become indispensable to the peace and harmony of civilized bodies, and be warranted in their institution by the sovereign law of general utility; admitting also, that fictitious limits will imperceptibly arise out of the circumstances of society in its progress to refinement; admitting, that in bodies, whose members are numerous, such distinctions must exist in a greater or less degree, and that whether permanent or fluctuating, whether hereditary or personal, some flattering appendages will attach to those whom authority or property, public influence or private aggrandizement have exalted above the rest; allowing
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these points, it will appear that in all bodies coalescing into a compact of civil society, whatever be their degree of purity, the simplicity of Nature is destroyed; the laws of her promulging superseded by those which necessity inspires; or, if continued as the elements of a more comprehensive legislation, they are so modified by circumstances, that they appear no longer the same. The distinctions therefore of Aristocracy are not upon these principles unjust, because they contradict Nature; since all the regulations of civil society would in that case come under the same character. The simplicity of Nature merits indeed our admiration, and is undoubtedly to be observed so far as is consistent with the complicate necessities of a numerous society; but when Nature shall have delivered her oracles, they must, after all, be tried by the rule of utility, and submit to the paramount authority of the public good.

Simplicity is indeed laid down by the strenuous advocates of a free government, as essential to the existence of general liberty; and it has been not a little insisted upon that a representative legislation, unshackled by the pre-eminence of a Monarch, or the influence
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of an Aristocracy, is the only security for the rights of mankind. The theory, as defended by its ablest advocates, possesses indeed no small recommendation, and appears to offer (supposing it practicable) no inconsiderable emolument to the world at large. And were I confident of individual virtue, were I secure of private patriotism, I would readily assent in the choice of a Government to the uncorrupt simplicity so strenuously recommended. Had I reliance upon the integrity of individual exertions; could I repose in the constancy of public spirit,—I would accede to the demands of unrestricted freedom; I would assign to the delegates of the people an authority paramount to all control, and make the organs of the public voice the sole administrators of the public functions; I would implead as innovations all distinctions that existed not upon general consent, and suffer all authorities to bow to the Majesty of the People.

But while the passions of mankind possess their turbulence; while discord divides the bonds of union, and violence distorts the functions of reason; while interest tramples upon integrity, and private emolument swallows up public virtue, I would not commit the
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solid concerns of a great empire to the mercy or the caprice of a fluctuating body ; I would not seek a refinement to which the portion of existing virtue is not competent ; nor would I suffer the vessel of state to float, like the ark of old, upon the heaving bosom of tumultuous waves, nor expose its stability to the tampering experiments of successive innovations.

It has been contended, that a Government constructed upon principles of simplicity, possesses advantages, to which a complicated system, like our own, can never pretend. I am ready to allow the justice of the observation with respect to some particulars: I am ready to admit that œconomy may be best consulted, and the evils of corruption most successfully detected in a scheme of Government whose parts are few, and whose administrators are not dignified by the appendages of rank and influence : but there is a defect in all such systems, which preponderates in evil against the combined advantages which they pretend to bestow. Whatever be their commendations in the sphere of theory, to the eye of experience they present no charms ; they want that permanence, that vigor, and that uniformity which systems exhibiting

biting more complicity are found to possess. Nothing is more harrassing to the feelings, nothing more formidable to the security of individuals, than a government whose wheels are lightly hung, and whose laws are exposed to the perpetual fluctuations of discretionary policy. There is less evil in the settled severity of rigorous despotism, than in the capricious benignity of an unsteady freedom; and the possible ills of repeated change present more horror than the defined exactions of uniform tyranny.

In states, where the rude hand of oppression has enchained the national will, and impregnated with despotism all the channels of authority, the vassal learns to know his allotted sphere, and to ascertain the limits of his circumscribed range; he partakes, without alarm, the scanty boon assigned him; bends, by habitude, to the circumstances of his lot, and finds in the uniformity of public protection a counterbalance to the wrongs of servitude. But in a state where the movements of Government are less steadily directed; where the ardor of melioration destroys confidence in present decisions; and where the ordinances of the empire
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are committed rather to the discussion of the philosopher than the execution of the magistrate,—the evils of uncertainty possess a baneful magnitude. There no roots can penetrate the stubborn soil ; no permanence consolidates the blossoms of freedom, nor mellow into maturity the fruits of wholesome authority.

Transported by the flattering delusion of the moment, the enthusiastic patriot exults in his imagined superiority ; when suddenly the horizon of his felicity is darkened ; the forces of the reigning yield to the strength of the rising faction, and the laws which were stamped with past approbation are cast into the new mould of a more perfect policy. Where, amidst such clashing factions, can private security and reciprocal confidence exert their gentle radiance ? Jealous distrust sits brooding around, and the superiority that's fought or dreaded, moves the pang of envious discontent.

Ambitious to exalt himself in the public esteem, by more than ordinary effusions of patriotic zeal, each aspires to rise above the other in the scale of estimation, rather than of virtue ; and as jealousy or envy, as hope or fear inspire,
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each labours to aggrandize his own fame in the public opinion, by impeaching the purity of rival patriotism. Thus the harmony of social union is interrupted; the tranquil pleasures of repose are lost in the tumults of contentious rivalry; and the gentler laws of attachment are proscribed by the rigorous maxims of an unfeeling Patriotism. Hence, in the history of ancient states, such experiments appear in all instances to have been made without effect; and from the accidents which were inseparable from this seeming good, a thousand ills of the most baneful malignity have been seen to flow. The evil passions have enjoyed an ample licence under the fairest semblance of virtuous restriction: amidst the enthusiasm of an imagined liberty have been felt the horrors of tenfold slavery: and all the maladies of an unsound authority have raged amidst the delusive blaze of ideal perfection.

It has been before remarked, that one of the strongest arguments in favour of simplicity in the forms of Government, is the facility which it offers in the detection of its evils, and consequently of remedying them with promptitude and effect.

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There is, indeed, no doubt that complicity and difficulty are pretty nearly connected, and that the existing defect in a complicate system may find some shelter amongst the multiplicity of its parts. Allowing, however, that in a Government like our own, the complicity of its structure baffles, in many particulars, the detection of its evils; and consequently prevents the possibility of cure,—it must at the same time be observed, that this principle so depreciated gives to the constitution a compactness and solidity which fewer parts and less dependency among them could not produce. To the existence of this complicity we owe that tempered equipoise which the reciprocal action of the component orders effects in their several functions and departments: to this complicity we are indebted for that permanence which the constitution exhibits amidst all the vicissitudes of Europe; that stubborn firmness by which it defies the attacks of innovation, and outlives the tumult of change: to this complicity we owe the energy with which it resists the shafts of popular violence, and evades the nostrums of political quackery: to this, in short, we owe that rigor which it possesses in curbing the obliquities of licentiousness, while it encourages
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the glow of freedom; that invincible stability with which it meets the rage of party, and rises invulnerable from the storms of faction: compacted by bonds of natural connection, and supplied with motives for emulous contention, the orders thus at once unite and repel, counteract and coalesce; their separate advantage dictates the first, their common interest urges the last; their jealousies involve no discord, their harmony no intrigue; and their union and their counteraction equally serve the preservation of all.

It might further be remarked, that the facility of detecting the unsoundness of the parts, esteemed among the most advantageous characteristics of simple forms of Government, may not upon all principles be deemed a good. No evil in a state can rise, in point of baneful magnitude, above the turbulent mischiefs of continual reform. The perpetual application of remedial policy to the transient irregularities of the governing system, leads to debilities as injurious and enervating to the body politic as the continual tampering with medicinal potions does to the natural constitution. In all states of civil society evil will blend with good, and

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vice will adulterate the purity of virtue : while humanity retains its wonted characteristics, corruption will grow out of the noxious stock of human depravity ; and in the ample sphere of an extended administration the luxuriant shoots of private interest will entwine among the vigorous branches of public principle. It were vain to expect in the imperfect reign of political virtue, an authority purged of all oppression, a patriotism devoid of all self-interest : it were vain to expect that the orders of state should drop the passions of humanity, and that public bodies should stand exempt from that bias which individuals obey.

Simplicity therefore, in the structure of a Government, is exposed to objections of serious magnitude ; and, in obviating the mischiefs of an intricate system, gives birth to disorders of more frequent recurrency, and more fatal extent than those which it affects to remove. While it exposes to ready detection the nascent evil, it keeps the public spirit in a temper of fluctuating uncertainty ; while it checks the insinuations of gradual corruption, it keeps alive the rankling discontents of a jealous patriotism ; while it curbs the growth of subtle tyranny, it retards
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the advancement of steady authority; opens, by a thousand dissensions, the closing wounds of faction, and administers eternal fuel to the flames of discord.

Hitherto we have proceeded upon the abstract question of Theoretic Politics, and have all along supposed a Government to be formed. This, however, is not the situation in which we stand: the question, as it regards ourselves, is not Whether we shall establish a system of Monarchy or Republicanism? but, Whether we shall exchange the latter for the former? Whether we shall subvert the one, in order to establish the other?

Supposing therefore, that the arguments in behalf of Republicanism were deemed valid in the scale of reasoning against those which support the claims of Monarchy; supposing, that in the comparison of disputed forms the scale had preponderated in favour of representative authority; the argument must take a new turn when applied to the demolition of an existing Government; and the reasoning which demonstrated in the case of election, would not have been conclusive in the case of exchange.

Prejudice is the inevitable offspring of habit, and, under some shape and in a certain degree, exercises its influence over minds of every description. Prejudices imbibed in early infancy ; prejudices transmitted by successive generations, and rendered dear by supposed advantages connected with them, shoot deep their roots into the soil of affection, and are not easily torn from the tenacious bosom. It is true that in proportion as the understanding acquires its vigor, and the mind perfects its information, this habitual bias diminishes its influence ; and the mind, enlarged by comprehensive science, becomes more competent to equitable decision. Yet, even amidst the blaze of matured knowledge, and in the zenith of advanced refinement, prejudices suffer not a total extirpation : some late remains still cling around the heart, and chain the affection of mankind to forms under which they once have flourished, and establishments from which they once derived protection and security. Whatever therefore may be the recommendations of a new system ; however specious may be its advantages ; however it may rise in wisdom and in lustre above the diminished attractions of the old, yet there are inconveniencies attending the exchange,

exchange, which nothing should induce mankind to encounter but corruption the most enormous, insolence the most oppressive, and misery the most profound. An host of inveterate prejudices arm against those reforms which would tear down the monuments of ancient wisdom, brand with ignominy all the institutions of ancient policy, and demolish the idolized forms of immemorial usage. Some respect is in all cases to be paid to those attachments which a series of ages has begotten, and which a long familiarity has consolidated; which have grown out of early sensibilities, and kept pace with the vigor of progressive passion: these may be purged by reason, and mollified by reflection; they may be silenced by prudence, they may be suppressed by fear; yet, in moments of occasion, their embers will glow, and their vigor revive: rebellious against those authorities which have combated their influence, they will embarrass the progress of novel institutions, and show, by obstacles of serious distraction, that though variable in their energy, they are indestructible in their essence; and though divisible from the judgment, they are inseparable from the heart.

Attached by long and felicitous experience to a monarchical system, the breast of an Englishman harbours ten thousand prejudices in favor of that authority from which he supposes himself to have derived such splendid advantages; he looks back upon the æras of change recorded in the annals of his country, and finds some of the noblest struggles of patriotic virtue exercised in support of that authority which he is proud to cherish; he calls up to view the luminous events which circumscribed the Monarch's throne, without sacrificing the lustre of prerogative, and expanded the rights of freedom without pouring in the flood of licentiousness; he glances with horror over that period which gave up the nation to the havock of Republicanism; over that period in which a system of unexampled oppression was established by the pretended Reformers of an abused authority, and the boasting adherents of a meliorating policy. Would he silence the advocates of modern reform, he points to that epoch of tumult and regicide when the national fury was let loose upon the orders of state, and all was given up to confusion and to change: he bids them eye the dread disorders which followed these events, and covered with
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calamity the face of the realm. The bonds of ancient compact are dissolved, the forces of discontent are exalted, and the glory of England is committed to the ravages of a faction :—property, talents, and equity, do homage to poverty, ignorance, and injustice :—the extravagance of a Monarch is replaced by the insolence of a demagogue ; the ambition of priests succeeded by the enthusiasm of fanatics, and the despotism of one exchanged for the tyranny of many. He fixes with attention upon the shouts which hailed departed faction, and the triumphs that pursued recovered Monarchy : he dwells with rapture upon those efforts of Patriotism which again defined the bounds of authority, and gave, in the event of a great Revolution †, an example at once to the oppressor and the oppressed : he traces, in the actors of this dignified scene, principles that echo to the feelings of his heart : he regards their labours as teeming with wisdom, and abounding in interest : he eyes the caution which accompanied their enterprizes, and the prudence which tempered their resolves : he views them emulous of their country's honour, and studious to support the

† 1688.

languid state; holding together the divided chain, and supplying with promptness the pernicious chasm: he observes them restoring rather than precipitating the tottering fabric, and consolidating by a new force the debilitated authority: he perceives amidst the distractions of revolutionary tumult no spirit of factious riot; no rage of confiscation and plunder: he reads no tales of slaughtered innocence: he hears no clamours of *equalizing* outrage: he views the vacant throne surrounded by the conciliated bands of disunited parties; the wheels of state conducted by a fictitious instrument of substituted authority; till the diadem was placed upon a more deserving head, and Government was restored to its accustomed energy.

If it be still contended that such reasoning participates too strongly of prejudice, and that the bias of opinion contributes more to its prevalence than the strength of reason,—it must be replied, that there are prejudices which the wise would not disown, nor the rational disclaim: prejudices which expediency prompts us to cherish; and which prudence forbids us to renounce. Circumstances might be assigned
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in human life which present formidable dangers to naked contemplation; and scenes in which the mind, stripped of its native prejudices, encounters a serious risque. Nor is this all; some deference is surely due to the uninfluenced decisions of enlightened minds; some delicacy is surely to be exercised in judging the public labours of experienced Legislators: some caution should be employed in criticising the talents and the patriotism of those who spurned the tameness of abject submission, and cast the forms of established authority in the mould of generous freedom. Armed with the forces of revolutionary law, they precipitated the Monarch, yet preserved the monarchy; they banished the tyrant, yet guarded inviolable the rights of the throne. Yet they were not in a state of ignorance as to the different advantages of the varied modes of Government; nor were they (as some would pretend) left afloat amidst the waves of political scepticism. They could advert to past experience; they could borrow wisdom from the conduct of preceding Legislators. The evils of Monarchy were felt by them in all their painful extent; yet Monarchy continued to preserve their attachment, and determine their choice. They
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were not ignorant of the claim which Republicanism might possess, to a preference in the constitution of a Government:—The experiment had in their history been tried; and its pretensions ascertained to their fullest extent: all its advantages must have been present to their view; all its recommendations strong in their recollection: they could judge with competency how far it was suited to the genius of the people, and the condition of the empire. In addition to these considerations, they had incitements to Republicanism, which neither the factious in France nor the discontented in Britain could at this day pretend to exhibit. Oaths and covenants the most sacred had been violated by the * Royal Prevaricator; acts of outrage and of tyranny had been perpetrated by him in defiance of law, and in contempt of remonstrance; fear had prompted him to precipitate flight, and the country was now delivered from a deliberate tyranny. If ever therefore Monarchy might be deemed inexpedient, it would surely be most reasonably so at a crisis when the enormities of the Sovereign were read in the tumult of the country: if

* James II.

ever Republicanism might command a preference, it surely would most naturally have triumphed in that moment when the public resentment glowed against the fugitive Monarch, and the disorganized authorities were in a situation to admit political experiment. Except therefore we maintain the presumptuous claims to a light which never gleamed upon preceding patriots; except we cherish the boastful delusion of a knowledge which escaped the sages who have taught us, we must yield some deference to those who compassed the Revolution upon which we repose: we must allow some degree of weight to their decisions; who, amidst the blaze of triumphant Patriotism, immortalized their attachment to limited monarchy.

Admitting therefore, that ancient prejudices influence, to no small extent, the patriotic spirit of the present times; and that habitual bias acts powerful in rivetting our attachment to monarchy, we have at least the satisfaction of treading in the steps of no mean Patriots; we have at least the consolation of supporting an authority which found supporters in the proudest luminaries of British history. It is true, the

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Patriots of a century past had not the advantages of those superior discoveries which make so prominent a figure in the sphere of modern politics : Priestly had not dealt his republican menaces ; Paine had not uttered his equalizing oracles. The defects of accident had not been magnified into irremediable disorders ; the imperfections of humanity had not provoked the violence of tumultuous assault ; nor had the scattered spirits of disaffection ranged their forces against the depreciated institutions of antiquity. It was not then acknowledged in the science of politics, that revolutionary law is the first principle of rational government ; or that the privilege of change was the proudest advantage of a free people : yet Milton had darted the full glare of his republican scepticism ; yet Sydney had probed the authority of Kings ; and Locke had proclaimed the duties of resistance. Proud therefore of acting up to the wisdom of such ancestors, we are little emulous of outstripping their achievements ; we readily own the influence their decisions possess ; and copy, without blushing, the dignity of their example.

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That the constitution of which we boast, and the constitution we experience, possess not an accurate resemblance to each other we are ready to allow : that in the multifarious movements of an entire century the complicate wheels of this political machine have incurred some embarrassment, is a truth to which every reasonable man must subscribe ; a truth which men, highest in the confidence of Government and the esteem of the public, have decidedly avowed ; a truth which the most outrageous advocates of the existing Government would not presume to controvert. But he deserves little of his injured country who, in a moment when revolutionary enthusiasm threatens to subvert all the valuable distinctions of civil society, would drag to invidious light her latent weaknesses, and inflame, by aggravated pictures of existing grievances, the kindling rebellion of her disaffected members. It cannot, it ought not to be denied, that the influence of the Crown has passed the constitutional limit ; that the forces of Aristocracy have exceeded their just proportion ; that the representation bows, in many particulars, to venality and corruption ; and that the national borders have, by constant wars and sanguinary policy, diminished the

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public felicity, and added to the mass of inevitable misery ; but in a moment like the present, a moment distinguished by an unparalleled ferment of the public mind ; a moment when the colours of anarchy are floating in the air, and hostilities are maintained against all the promiscuous establishments of authority and subordination, the eye of faithful Patriotism will glance with gentle partiality over the defects which cloud, and rather fix upon those excellencies which adorn the Government it wishes to preserve ; it will calculate the privileges of that authority which modern innovators assail, and testify its fidelity to the establishments themselves, by reserving the remonstrance against their defects to periods of less agitation, and moments of less danger.

Was it ever known, was it ever recorded, that a government planned with the wisest policy, a government conducted by the most unimpeached sagacity, kept its just line of uniform virtue ; preserved unalterable its characteristic excellence ; repelled in every instance the assaults of corruption, and triumphed completely over the defects of accident ? The fairest example which the world produces, is
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that government so often insisted upon, the Republic of America ; and were the history of this country complete ; had it counted up a due series of mellowing ages, it would stand as an ample refutation of all the reasonings offered in support of a monarchy. But formed by the imperious dictates of necessity, produced from a combination of peculiar circumstances, America will stand for no example in deciding upon the policy of this country : ten thousand particulars, which cannot here be adverted to, gave naturally rise to the system of government which regulates that empire. Separated from the seat of ancient Sovereignty by a wide ocean, and still wider animosities, it were not to be expected that a system of authority which had excited their wars, drenched their fields, and arrested their commerce, would ever be adopted by a people whom circumstances had left to the election of their government. How far the system which now flourishes in such enviable prosperity, shall maintain its existence in the storms which future events may excite against this in common with other nations, it will remain for time and posterity to decide : it is our part to judge of past transactions alone, and to derive our maxims of practical policy from

from those experiments, which having been instituted in past ages, have seen all the changes of human event, and undergone all the vicissitudes which were necessary to the perfection of their character.

But the passions of men are now heated to an extraordinary degree ; a popular phrenzy reigns among all the lower orders of society, and the ruling principle of modern philosophy is the destruction of existing authorities ; the falchion of reformation is brandished in bold defiance, and threatens to humble, in levelled indistinction, all the diversified institutions of society. The question no longer is, Whether the government we boast have any defects ? but, Whether it possess any virtues ? The contention no longer is, Whether it deserve encomium ? but, Whether it be worth preserving ? A thousand circumstances conspire to shew, that the present moment is less favourable to rational reform than any which history records : the events which are transacting, and the doctrines which are published at the present crisis, are not of that character which the patient operation of corrective policy demands. The business of reform is cool and deliberate ; the conduct

conduct of revolution is rapid and enthusiastic ; the one must be transacted in moments of tranquillity, the other must be operated in the bosom of confusion ; to the one is requisite a prudent policy, the other demands an enterprising system ; the one resorts to experience, the other indulges in theory ; the former is marked by cautious gradation, the latter is characterized by vigorous precipitance. It would be superfluous to insist upon the strict applicability which the formidable characteristics of the latter possess, to the fermenting intemperance of modern politics : if therefore the correction of abuses, if the remediation of defects be the innocent objects of clamorous patriotism ; if behind the colours of reform no harpies of equalization shelter their destructive venom ; if those who demand the purification wish not the subversion of the constitution, then let them intermit those ill-timed remonstrances which assist the murmurs of sedition, and shake the attachment of unsettled virtue ; let the minute defects of a government, impregnated with wisdom and surrounded with benignity, be generously covered to the eye of inquisitive discontent ; let the lighter wounds of the constitution be kept unprobed till the cutting blast

of revolutionary phrenzy has dropped its fury, and the hemisphere of politics has recovered its serenity: then, under the auspices of restored tranquillity, the public mind will have recovered that steady vigor, that collected energy, which may enable it to reform the defects without sacrificing the excellencies of the constitution, and to remedy its debilitated functions without amputating its most valuable establishments.

But all is not yet lost; amidst the clamours of calumnious falsehood, the voice of truth has not been drowned; her accents have prevailed above the rage of conflicting sentiments, and Europe has witnessed the fidelity of Britain. Fired with enthusiasm at the events which broke the shackles of Gallic servitude, we participated indeed the triumphs of a people rising in the scale of dignity; a people who showed themselves deserving of an exalted freedom by uniting the claims of loyalty and patriotism. But false to honour, to loyalty, to patriotism, the country once marked for the asylum of peaceful arts; the country once dear to the feelings of the patriot bosom, now wakes the resentment of indignant virtue, and draws tears of blood from the eye of degraded freedom.

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Did the early applause of Gallic emancipation need apology, it would be easy to discover how naturally such impressions might be made upon the British sensibilities, alive to all the transports of generous policy. The eyes of Europe fixed with astonishment upon that transformed people, who from a state of immemorial servitude emerged into instantaneous liberty ; the irritating enormities which sowed the seeds of this splendid event, and the brilliant achievements by which it was effected, made too considerable a figure in the theatre of politics not to be considered of momentous importance. While courts and cabinets regarded this example with political alarm, and trembled for its influence upon their vassal subjects, the latter eyed it as an auspicious check upon the tyrannies of Europe, and hailed it as the happy presage of their falling chains.

In Britain, where liberal authority exerts its empire ; where the rights of man are blazoned in charters and acknowledged in juries,—the energies of a people aspiring at freedom could not be regarded with indifference. France had for ages distinguished herself as the rival of the British power, and the wanton disturber of

the British tranquillity. The memory of unprovoked and expensive wars, awakened by the pressure of every additional burden, kept alive an animosity of no mean degree against that proud authority which had laboured by exciting the dissensions of states to balance the fates of Europe : an authority whose intrigues had embroiled in repeated hostilities nations allied by blood and interest ; an authority whose councils had widened the wounds of disaffection, fanned the sparks of discontent, and thwarted the means of reconciliation.

The British nation could not view without a sentiment of triumph the subversion of that court, to which it owed the loss of so much blood and the accumulation of so much debt : it seemed but a just retaliation of political vengeance, that a court which had supported a colonial revolt against the constituted authorities of a rival nation, should fall an involuntary victim to the same principles, and suffer a defeat upon its own territories. The events which composed this distinguished revolution were not indeed characterized by perfect justice ; but the atrocious guilt of the vanquished authorities had possessed too strongly the public
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abhorrence to be cancelled by events of accidental violence, or obliterated by acts of transient injustice. The councils which issued from the Court of France were distinguished by the features of interest and intrigue; and the spirit which impregnated its political measures partook alike of duplicity and oppression. Determined despot in its own sphere, it sought alliance with the legions of * distant revolt; it cherished abroad those systems which it stifled at home, and fostered a freedom in a foreign soil which it never suffered to germ within its own domains,

The sentiment therefore which naturally resulted from the bloodless triumphs over this defeated court, partook equally of generous exultation and revengeful joy; the splendor of the acts by which it was subverted, no less than the humiliating debasement of an ancient rival, commended to the rapture of British sensibility a revolution which promised such advantages to their future repose. Britain, rejoiced with the invidious enthusiasm of ancient Rome over fallen Carthage, considered the depression of its enemy

* America.

as the inevitable ground-work of its own pre-eminence, and anticipated in the regulations of a purified authority the golden age of undisturbed empire.

The joy which attended these distinguished achievements exhibited a victory over national prejudice, which stamped no common honour upon the British character. The conduct of France had, in all ages, set at variance two people divided from each other by such narrow limits:—this prejudice thus excited, was blended with the elements of early instruction, and deemed essential to the purity of patriotism; the passions were heated by recorded facts, and inflamed by insinuated fears till an unconquerable aversion was established to that people whose perfidy we were taught to dread, and whose councils we had learned to despise. The great actors in every political game escape their due share of public infamy by the sacred protection of cabinet secrecy, or the inviolability of exalted rank;—that odium therefore which should pursue the guilty authors, was in this, as in other instances, transferred to the innocent instruments; and our aversion to the councils fastened upon the executors of those measures

measures which interrupted the progress of our peaceful arts, and turned the current of public activity from commerce to war.

The prejudice thus generated had received no little confirmation from the dissimilarity of political temperament in the historic character of the two nations. While every page of English record exhibits some combat in defence of freedom, some reclamation against abuse, some indignation at tyrannic insolence, — the history of France exhibited on the contrary a long series of despotic conquests, acquired over the bending fervility of a passive multitude. We fought in vain for Sydneys and Hampdens in the annals of France; — for charters extorted by virtuous opposition, and despotism modified by intrepid patriotism. No ray of dignified freedom was seen to pierce the settled clouds of immemorial tyranny: — the alarm never appeared to have gone forth, till the spoils of oppression had precluded the possibility of resistance; and the evil was become of too serious a magnitude to admit of a cure. Seldom did a murmur escape this abject people till ruinous war had depopulated their streets, and ghastly famine had desolated their abodes. So uniform a compliance had marked their character, so continued a fervility had impregnated their con-

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duct,

duct, that disgusted with the past, we augured ill of the future; nor deemed it possible that a people should emerge from slavery who had discovered so little the energies of freedom.

Yet the æra which fixed the dawn of Gallic freedom, fixed the downfall of British prejudice. Faithful to the principles of our forefathers, we applauded that courage which broke the bonds of ancient tyranny, and triumphed in the extension of that liberal policy which gave to a nation, abandoned in all its epochs to prostrate servility, all the generous privileges of an exalted freedom,

The enthusiasm, though widely, was not indeed universally felt. Diversity of system and different degrees of sensibility prevented the uniformity of public opinion; and murmurs of dissatisfaction were heard to blend among the shouts of acclamation.

It would be violating truth, it would be sacrificing justice, to applaud the individual parts of this tumultuous transaction, and to cover with admiration all the specific decrees of these distinguished reformers. Tyranny had filled up
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the ample measures of its guilt; and overstrained oppression had communicated an unknown energy to this irritated people. The blow was struck in that felicitous moment which concurring circumstances united to design; and all the indiscretions of enthusiasm were infused into the hasty systems of an impetuous patriotism. It was easy to imagine that amidst the havoc of universal reform disorders would find their place; and that acts of violence would inevitably accompany the necessary modification of ancient establishments: but turning an eye upon the yet blacker catalogue of courtly crimes, perpetrated under the guilty protection of ancient authority, the advocates of this new system found little difficulty in pardoning the temporary injustice of an unsettled Legislation; they carried their views forward to the future moments of abated enthusiasm: they anticipated the arrival of a more tranquilized period; when a liberal policy should correct the errors of elementary legislation, repair the wounds of lacerated authorities, and remedy the wrongs of expatriated exiles.

But vanished are all those delusory hopes; and not Imagination's self can conjure up a
shade

shade of future expectation. Foreign war and internal faction have torn asunder the uniting spirits, have drawn out the deformities of national corruption, and given up to anarchy and irreligion this promising empire. The growing influence of a republican association, whose forces had been encreasing during the reign of the first legislature, acquired at length a fatal augmentation; and rising in the scale of divided authority, bore down all those institutions which compose the splendid character of the first Revolution. All the milder lights of equitable patriotism were swallowed up in the blaze of this formidable faction*. Before the legions of sanguinary revolt were seen to fall, the debilitated forces of a discredited Monarchy, and with them fell all the surviving distinctions of loyalty, humanity, and religion. From the bloody epoch which sealed their guilt and settled their authority, the terrors of the poignard have triumphed over all the considerations of honour and fidelity; and partly from fear, partly from corruption, each citizen has become the assassin of his neighbour. The digression which this people has displayed from all the principles of political virtue, was indeed rapid in the order of time, yet gradual in the chain of

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* The Jacobins.

of events. Injustice was seen to tarnish the steady lustre of those achievements which the first exertions of patriotic enthusiasm enrolled amongst its noblest acts; relaxed authority gave scope to the viler passions, and injustice was succeeded by a thousand fiends of more fell execution: public faith once violated, blood and plunder became familiar objects of steady contemplation: the refinements of virtue were no longer owned; the sensibilities of humanity no longer felt; injustice saw no obstacle; proscription acknowledged no bounds:—the reformers of tyranny became the peculators of their country, and the soil of freedom was mellowed with the blood of the innocent.

Much might be pardoned by a nation like our own, whose generous policy aims at no conquests; allows no tyranny:—much might be indulged to enthusiastic indiscretion by a people whose struggles for freedom have not in all cases kept within the channel of loyalty and mercy;—a people whose vigorous patriotism has itself, on some occasions, broke down the fences of ancient law, and snatched the sceptre from hereditary Sovereignty: but insatiable revenge and unprincipled outrage have

have turned the scale ; the feelings of sympathy can find no interest in murderous licence, and guilt has cancelled every existing claim to mercy and indulgence. Equally awake to loyalty and to freedom, the British nation spurns with honest indignation the outrageous doctrines of an equalizing policy. Dear to Britons are those fictitious bounds which mark the gradations of civil life, and preserve the balance of established orders. To them Monarchy assumes no terrors, Aristocracy no oppression, and Subordination no servility : with them authority is mild, and obedience rational : with them law acknowledges no distinction, and justice admits no exceptions : with them the crimes of the great are measured by the same rule of rigor which fixes the criminality of the mean ; and the wrongs of the domestic are expiated by the blood of the * noble. Jealous therefore of those authorities which protect their rights and guarantee their labours, Britons regard with steady veneration that constitution which fantastic reformers are anxious to depreciate ; this they cherish as their dearest birth-

* Case of Earl Ferrers, executed for the murder of his steward.

right, and leave to minds possessed by rebellious intoxication, to digest those purer systems which would disorganize all existing establishments, and destroy the universal sanctions of civil authority.

Perhaps no crisis ever exhibited a more equal experiment upon the temper of a nation, than that which has lately exercised the political feelings of the British public. Amidst the first effusions of Gallic enthusiasm, the energy of Government appeared to slumber: it was just that a nation, whose proudest boast was freedom, should be suffered to speak the language of conviction, and applaud or condemn the transactions of Europe, without the interfering dictates of an inquisitorial court. The multifarious discussion which filled up this interval, excited no small commotion in the public sentiment, and the enthusiasm of the people was not a little captivated by the flattering pretensions of universal freedom. The ferment which thus agitated all ranks of society, afforded an ample scope to those discontented factions, and those turbulent individuals which haunt the lurking recesses of the purest governments. Among the first were found those growing bo-

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dies whom the common principle of imagined oppression cements into a union of decided animosity against that authority under which they pretend to suffer. Among the latter were found those formidable adventurers who chalk out no line of steady conduct for their public labours, but, prompt to take advantage of occasions, commit the full stock of their talents and their credit to the doubtful hazard of experimental policy. To these were added the unprincipled and the licentious: all those whose interest is found in the tumults of confusion, and whose profits arise from the disorders of change. These naturally ranked amongst the admirers of subverted authority, and blended their licentious shouts with the acclamations of virtuous freedom. Had France maintained a purer character, and confirmed by subsequent refinements the sanguine prospects of her first advocates; had she continued her homage † to the *Restorer of her Liberty*, and guarded his throne from violence and regicide; had she preserved from injury the framers of her laws, and the guardians of her religion; had she

† Louis XVI. was so styled, after his acceptance of the first constitution.

protected her citizens from plunder, and her temples from sacrilege: in a word, had she supported the splendor of her first decrees, and maintained the spirit of her primitive laws; had she realized the visions of pacific empire, and filled up the grand outline of defensive policy, admiration might still have followed the blaze of her successive acts, and ~~the~~^{the} dangers have accrued to the British empire from the enthusiasm of her admirers, or the councils of her advocates. But apostate from the principles herself had divulged; from principles to which she had pledged herself by compacts the most sacred, by oaths the most inviolable, France now assumes a new character in the eye of Europe; and justly divorced from the affection of the honest and the virtuous, can retain no advocates, but among the wicked and the factious. Those who adored with prostrate veneration the early transactions of her first Legislators, have forwardly renounced their defeated expectations, and buried their affection for this abandoned nation in the tombs that enclose the mangled limbs of her martyred patriots. They have seen with horror the destructive poignard planted in the bosom of the most virtuous citizens: they have beheld with indignant sympathy the first

reformers of tyrannic authority blended in the havoc of a promiscuous massacre, or surrendered to the murderous scaffold under the insolent mockery of a pretended sentence.

Over their tombs shall hover the gliding forms of departed virtue ; and the urn that encloses their relics be bathed with the tears of dejected freedom : the memory of their patriotism shall be embalmed by the grateful incense of the Poet's muse, and future ages shall read with faithless wonder of their elevation and their fall.

The public sentiment has therefore been put to the fairest trial, and the result is most honourable to the fidelity and the wisdom of a powerful nation. The flagrant direktion of honour and virtue in the conduct of our enemies, has taught us to renounce the enthusiasm with which we eyed their freedom, and the confidence we repose in their policy. The prejudices which fell with the falling chains of ancient tyranny, have now revived with the reviving spirit of foreign conquest ; their fraternizing vows have excited our abhorrence ; and their insolent strides for universal empire
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have stamped them the Depredators of human society. Such have been the feelings of the British public ; and generous resentment has penetrated the nation.

Individuals and corporations have disputed the palm of prompt obedience, and sworn to oppose with united influence the destruction of civil authority : the rankling animosities of private dissent have fought, in the intermission of their divisions, to establish that calm which the common danger demands, and converted their arms of reciprocal contention into the instruments of mutual defence. The commonwealth, emerged from the waves that threatened her existence, now rides in triumphant security, and looks back with horror upon the tremendous gulphs which had opened for her destruction : she exults in the tried fidelity of her sons, and acquires force from the impotent machinations of her defeated antagonists.

The cup of Gallic iniquity appears now to be full ; and invention cannot create a picture of increased enormity. Dread infatuation seems to have agitated the distempered minds of this prostitute people, and urged them to all the va-

rieties of anarchy, murder, and sacrilege. While therefore the tremendous judgments of Heaven are overspreading so large a portion of Europe, let the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. Events have so far seen their completion, that mankind may now calculate the balance of the whole, and deduce from the stupendous acts of this mighty drama, the most important lessons in religion and civil government.

The merciless sacrifice of a guiltless Monarch may provoke our resentment against the perpetrators of so foul a deed ; but when Nature has paid the tribute of sorrow, reflection must pass to other sources, in order that an event of such publicity, a crime of such aggravated enormity, may answer the ends of public instruction. We are not to regard the suffering Monarch as a victim offered up at the shrine of inhumanity, nor consider the effusion of his blood as the temerarious outrage of popular tumult. In him we are to behold clemency suffering for the wrongs of tyranny ; and the innocent expiating the crimes of the guilty. In the angry populace which demanded this sacrifice, we are to view the formidable terrors of a people awakened from the torpor of servitude

vitude to the phrenzy of revolutionary vengeance. We may read in the ferocity of their proceedings, a melancholy history of that insensibility which despotism generates in the outraged subject, and learn the influence that tyranny possesses in corrupting the native propensities of the heart. In the ruthless proscription of the degraded orders, the eye must turn from the cruel sufferings of unoffending individuals, to consider those comprehensive principles upon which depend the mighty movements of united millions. Extended in their number and privileges in their prerogatives beyond the bounds of even temperate injustice, these orders had acquired a terrible majesty, and wantoned in the liberal exercise of unchastised oppression. The scale once turned, no bounds could circumscribe the bursting flames of public indignation swelled with the memory of past enormities, and heated by the embers of unburied insults. In the frantic triumphs which marked the demolition of their once venerated orders, retaliated vengeance is conspicuously read, and civil rights are seen in their turn to humble those privileges which once swallowed up all civil rights.

In the rage that fastens upon the institutions of religion, and the zeal that disseminates infidelity and atheism, are discovered the remote effects of that ancient policy which subjugated the consciences of men to the tyranny of priests, and excluded the bulk of mankind from the study of their religious faith. Taught to regard their established confessors as the sole depositaries of the Christian oracles, they, at length, penetrated the shallow deceit, and with a consequence drawn from their authorized systems, have madly deemed, that in abolishing the yoke of an imperious priesthood, they are absolved from the obligations of religious authority. The ignorance once cherished by a designing clergy is now operating the establishment of national infidelity ; and the blood of martyred Huguenots has fallen upon the heads of those whom the convulsions of an empire has torn from the sanctuaries of their guilty authority.

Lastly. In the changeful systems of these triumphant anarchists ; in the facility with which they dissolve the bonds of pledged allegiance, and fluctuate through all the varieties of government, will be read the formidable risk which an empire incurs by the doubtful chance
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of political experiment. When once the sinews of a government are destroyed, and its ancient forms are sacrificed to indiscriminating zeal, not all the vigor of patriotic virtue, not all the surviving energy of public spirit will be sufficient to check the influx of licentiousness, or inspire the enacted laws with effective authority. The powerful enthusiasm which accompanied this revolution was seen to dictate a thousand refinements upon ancient policy, whose practicability and expedience were never debated.—In laudably detesting the horrors of tyranny, they rushed into the full blaze of unbounded freedom, where, frantic with excess of joy, they indulged in dreams of immaculate policy, and awoke in the arms of a *faction*. It was in this interval that wide destruction was carried into all the departments of established authority. Absolved from the control of ancient laws, all orders were seen to blend in unwarrantable licence : the vigor which should coerce being no longer felt, all the sluices of iniquity opened upon the convulsed empire :—before its impetuosity sunk the surviving reliques of dilapidated grandeur ; and so large a portion of Europe exhibited one extended scene of devastation and horror.

Amidst

Amidst reflections of such a nature, the mind cannot dwell without advantage ; and lessons of most salutary moment will not fail of impressing all ranks of polished society. If the dread decree of universal anarchy be not gone forth ; if the waiving messengers of fate are not compassing the disorganization of Christian empires, the different orders of social establishment will perfect their wisdom by the events which have now transpired, and consolidate their authority by a system of more perfect policy.

Magistrates will learn to venerate that law themselves administer, and to wield with discrete energy the sceptre of authority.

Statesmen will learn to inspire their councils with equitable policy ; to economize the fruits of national industry ; to banish corruption from their administrative functions, and to exalt above every consideration of interest and aggrandizement, the public good.

Nobles will learn to use with temper the privileges of their condition ; to exert no wanton tyranny over the humble dependents of their
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accidental influence, and to appear deserving of the honours they inherit by the dignified characteristics of an exalted virtue.

The *Ministers of Christianity* will learn to purify the systems they teach from all the fictions of an interested theology ; they will learn to guard against the baneful consequences of imperious dogmatism and sanctimonious superiority ; they will learn to diffuse the mild lustre of religious instruction through the darkened sphere of ignorance and profligacy, and to beget in the public mind a growing veneration for the altars of national religion.

Lastly. The *Inferior Orders of Society* will acknowledge the magnitude of those calamities which Change produces, and learn to cultivate the unfashionable virtue of political content : they will learn to regard, with just estimation, the solid advantages of a permanent authority, and tremble to break up that venerable soil out of which have flourished such generous fruits. Secure in the constancy of liberal protection, they will dread to encounter the tumultuous hazard of a dislocated sovereignty ; and balancing the partial defects of a reigning system

against

against the incalculable disorders of a new-moulded authority, will suffer no delusive doctrines to warp their loyalty, or sophistificate their patriotism. Thus will all orders participate of one common principle, and connect by motives of mutual interest in bonds of stricter union. The constitution will thus acquire a more compact stability, and its fainting springs receive a new energy ; fear will be supplanted by fidelity, subjection replaced by obedience ; the harmony of content will be amply extended, the influence of religion widely felt ; and the tranquillity of Europe will not have been broken in vain.

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